



### TRADE UNION STATISTICS, AUSTRALIA DECEMBER 1984

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- MAIL INQUIRIES** *write to* Information Services, ABS, P.O. Box 10, Belconnen, A.C.T. 2616 or any of our State offices.

#### MAIN FEATURES

Total membership of reporting trade unions at the end of 1984 was 3,028,500 an increase of 1.5 per cent over 1983. An estimated 55 per cent of total employees, a proportion unchanged from the previous year, were trade union members (males 61 per cent, females 45 per cent).

At the end of 1984 there were 329 reporting trade unions compared with 319 at the end of the previous year. This resulted from the identification of thirteen unions not previously included and the amalgamation of three unions with other existing unions.

Ten unions, with 80,000 or more members each, accounted for 36 per cent of total membership. The 110 unions, each with fewer than 500 members, accounted for less than one per cent of total membership.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES

##### Introduction

The figures in this publication have been compiled from questionnaires completed by individual trade unions in respect of their membership and area of operation as at the end of December each year.

##### Scope and coverage

2. Current lists of reporting trade unions are maintained by reference to lists used in previous years and to trade unions registered under the provisions of the various Federal and State industrial arbitration Acts, trade union Acts, etc.; from names of unions reported to be engaged in conciliation and arbitration proceedings, etc.; and from reports in trade journals, trade union and employer periodicals, newspapers and other publications. It should be noted that not all reporting trade unions are registered under the relevant Federal or State industrial arbitration legislation or State trade union Acts (see paragraph 10 below).

3. When obtaining statistics from trade unions operating wholly within one State or district, trade union secretaries are asked to report whether or not the union is a branch of an interstate, or a larger State or district organisation. This reporting reduces the possibility of duplication in the figures of the number of unions and of membership. An interstate or federated trade union (i.e. a union with members in more than one State or Territory) is treated as a separate union in each State or Territory in which it has members, but is counted only once in the

Australian total (see Table 1). Unions with interstate associations which are not strictly branches of a common organisation are counted as separate unions in the totals for Australia.

4. The published number of reporting trade unions varies from year to year as a result of amalgamations of unions, unions ceasing to operate, new unions being formed, existing organisations changing their status such that it brings them within the scope of the definition of a trade union (see paragraph 5), and existing unions reporting for the first time. At the end of 1984, there were 329 reporting trade unions compared with 319 at the end of 1983. This increase resulted from the inclusion of 13 unions (total membership of 4,276) reporting for the first time (12 of which were in existence before the end of December 1983), and the amalgamation of 3 unions with other existing unions.

##### Definitions

5. For the purpose of these statistics a *trade union* is defined as an organisation, consisting predominantly of employees, the principal activities of which include the negotiation of rates of pay and conditions of employment for its members. Non-operating unions or branches, i.e. those with no members at the date of collection, are not included in the statistics.

6. The *total membership* of the reporting trade unions represents the aggregate of the membership of individual unions; persons who are members of more than one union are therefore counted more than once in the totals. The extent of this duplication is not known. Members of unions who work overseas are excluded from the reported membership data. Membership figures may be affected by differences in the concept of membership adopted by different unions or by the same union at different times. (See paragraph 8 below.)

7. *Proportion of total employees.* The approximate percentages of wage and salary earners in employment (i.e. employees) who were members of trade unions are shown in Table 3. The proportions of total employees have been calculated from estimates of employees from the labour force survey published in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0). The percentages shown should be regarded as giving only a broad indication of the extent of union membership among employees, because they are based on estimates of *employed* wage and salary earners and the degree of unemployment of reported union members will affect the percentages for a particular year and comparisons over time.



### Comparability of series

8. Comparability of figures for different years may be affected by a number of factors. As stated in paragraph 6, there may be duplication in the count of members. This duplication may vary over time. Union rules on membership may follow different concepts and practices and this may be reflected in the level and fluctuations of the figures reported. Some unions confine their reported membership to 'financial' members whilst others may also include 'unfinancial' members. Individual unions may or may not include in their reported membership unemployed members, members who have retired from the labour force, disabled members, members with dues in arrears (who may be kept on union books for varying lengths of time), etc.

9. Membership of trade unions is shown separately for males and females for each State and Territory. The subdivision of total membership into males and females is not precise because some trade unions are unable to state the exact number of males and females among their members. The subdivision of total membership by States and Territories is also not precise because some unions in the Territories are affiliated with State organisations and their membership is reported under the heading of that State.

### Organisations registered under industrial arbitration legislation

10. Details of employer and employee organisations registered under the *Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Act* as at the end of 1984 (with comparable figures for 1983 shown in brackets) are: 82 (82) employer organisations; 148 (150) employee unions with membership of 2,492,536 (2,446,400) representing 82 (82) per cent of total membership of all reporting trade unions in Australia.

11. *Organisations registered under State industrial arbitration legislation, etc.* New South Wales organisations registered under provisions of the Trade Union Act

and the Industrial Arbitration Act are listed periodically in the *New South Wales Industrial Gazette*. The annual reports of the President of the Industrial Court in Queensland contain a list of employer and employee unions registered under provisions of the *Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act*. The *Western Australian Industrial Gazette* contains lists of unions of employers and workers registered under provisions of the *Industrial Arbitration Act*.

### Labour organisations

12. The main central labour organisations in Australia are the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and the Council of Professional Associations (CPA). For information on these organisations reference should be made to *Year Book, Australia* (1301.0).

### Related publications

*The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0)—issued monthly (\$1.10, \$1.90 incl. postage)

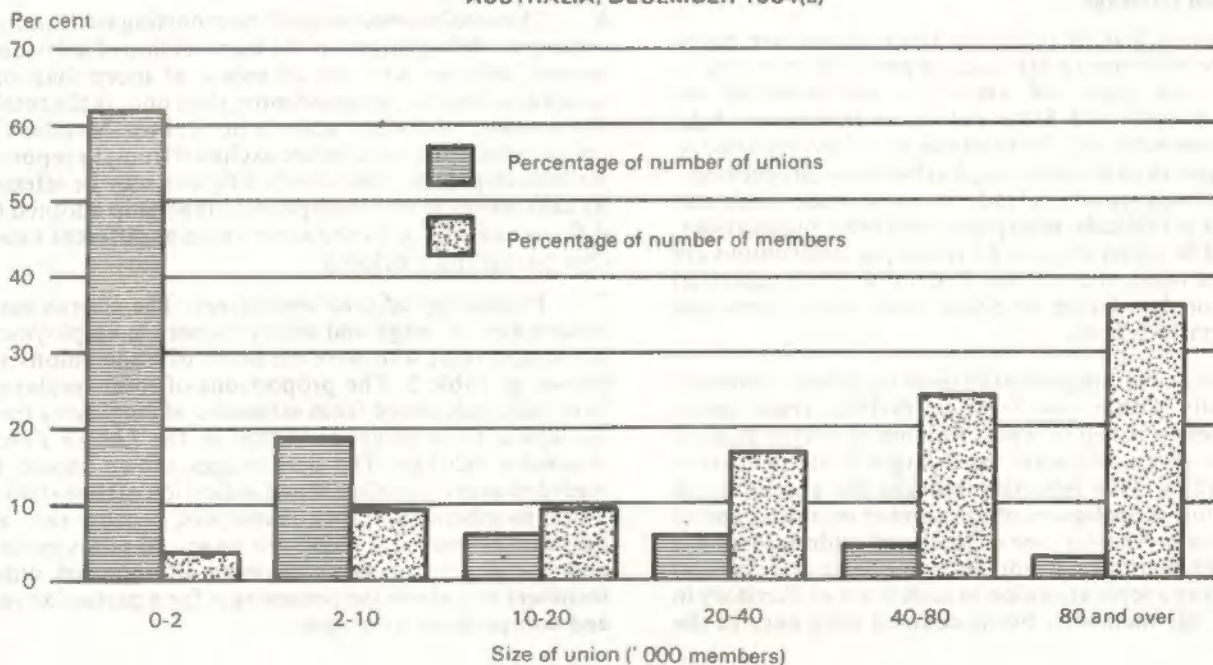
*Trade Union Members, Australia, March to May 1982* (6325.0)

13. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications, Australia* (1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Publications Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Publications Advice are available from any ABS office.

14. Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

**R.J. CAMERON**  
Australian Statistician

TRADE UNIONS : PERCENTAGE OF UNIONS AND MEMBERS ACCORDING TO MEMBERSHIP  
AUSTRALIA, DECEMBER 1984(a)



(a) For details see tables 4 and 5, page 4.

TABLE 1. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS, STATES AND TERRITORIES, DECEMBER 1979 TO DECEMBER 1984

End of December—	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
1979	192	174	139	142	153	121	77	88	328
1980	192	173	137	143	150	122	78	93	325
1981	191	173	138	141	149	123	75	91	324
1982	187	175	142	143	148	124	78	93	322
1983	186	174	138	141	146	123	75	92	319
1984	190	179	138	142	148	127	75	89	329

TABLE 2. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF MEMBERS, STATES AND TERRITORIES, DECEMBER 1979 TO DECEMBER 1984  
('000)

End of December—	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
MALES									
1979	727.9	514.5	268.6	191.1	158.1	62.1	13.3	35.8	1,971.4
1980	751.3	523.6	276.0	186.3	158.8	62.3	14.5	36.7	2,009.5
1981	772.3	522.9	285.6	178.0	156.4	63.4	14.2	36.6	2,029.4
1982	745.7	533.4	296.0	176.0	161.2	61.4	13.7	36.9	2,024.4
1983	730.6	529.1	299.6	174.3	162.2	61.1	13.9	36.4	2,007.2
1984	741.4	545.4	300.8	171.4	166.2	62.2	13.5	39.9	2,041.2
FEMALES									
1979	333.0	235.5	125.2	81.1	78.7	26.1	5.5	17.2	902.2
1980	357.4	246.6	132.1	85.3	75.9	26.1	5.8	17.3	946.3
1981	373.3	248.8	135.4	85.1	72.7	26.3	6.0	17.0	964.7
1982	381.9	256.7	142.7	82.7	73.3	26.7	6.5	17.5	988.0
1983	378.1	259.1	130.6	83.5	75.3	27.6	6.7	17.2	978.0
1984	373.1	260.5	133.9	86.9	78.0	29.0	6.8	18.9	987.3
PERSONS									
1979	1,060.8	750.0	393.8	272.2	236.7	88.2	18.8	53.0	2,873.6
1980	1,108.7	770.1	408.1	271.6	234.7	88.4	20.3	53.9	2,955.9
1981	1,145.6	771.7	421.0	263.1	229.1	89.8	20.1	53.7	2,994.1
1982	1,127.5	790.1	438.8	258.7	234.5	88.1	20.2	54.4	3,012.4
1983	1,108.7	788.2	430.2	257.8	237.5	88.6	20.6	53.6	2,985.2
1984	1,114.5	805.9	434.9	258.4	244.2	91.3	20.3	58.9	3,028.5

TABLE 3. TRADE UNION MEMBERS : PROPORTION OF TOTAL EMPLOYEES(a), AUSTRALIA, DECEMBER 1979 TO DECEMBER 1984  
(per cent)

End of December—	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
MALES									
1979	62	59	58	66	58	66	44	65	61
1980	63	59	57	65	55	66	45	67	61
1981	64	58	58	62	54	67	44	65	60
1982	64	61	59	62	56	69	41	69	62
1983	65	61	58	63	55	68	41	64	61
1984	64	60	60	60	55	68	42	66	61
FEMALES									
1979	48	44	48	47	48	52	38	46	47
1980	51	45	47	49	44	50	33	44	47
1981	52	45	47	48	42	51	31	41	48
1982	54	46	49	47	41	51	31	45	49
1983	51	45	43	45	40	53	33	38	46
1984	48	44	43	46	40	53	34	40	45
PERSONS									
1979	57	53	54	59	54	61	42	58	56
1980	59	53	54	58	51	60	41	58	56
1981	59	53	54	56	50	62	39	55	56
1982	60	55	55	57	50	63	37	59	57
1983	59	54	53	56	49	63	38	53	55
1984	58	54	53	55	49	63	38	53	55

(a) Based on estimates from the labour force survey. See paragraph 7 of the Explanatory notes.



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TABLE 4. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF UNIONS ACCORDING TO SIZE, AUSTRALIA, DECEMBER 1979 TO DECEMBER 1984

Number of members	End of December—					1984		
	Number of unions					Number of unions	Per cent of total unions	Cumulative per cent of total unions
	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983			
Under 100	41	39	36	46	41	41	12.4	12.4
100 and under 250	41	45	46	38	39	45	13.7	26.1
250 and under 500	28	23	26	25	25	24	7.3	33.4
500 and under 1,000	46	46	48	43	47	52	15.8	49.2
1,000 and under 2,000	44	46	45	45	41	41	12.4	61.6
2,000 and under 5,000	46	43	38	41	41	40	12.2	73.8
5,000 and under 10,000	20	21	22	21	21	22	6.7	80.5
10,000 and under 20,000	23	21	20	21	22	20	6.1	86.6
20,000 and under 30,000	11	11	12	9	13	13	4.0	90.6
30,000 and under 40,000	5	7	9	10	7	6	1.8	92.4
40,000 and under 50,000	9	9	7	9	8	11	3.4	95.8
50,000 and under 80,000	7	7	8	6	5	4	1.2	97.0
80,000 and over	7	7	7	8	9	10	3.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

TABLE 5. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF MEMBERS ACCORDING TO SIZE OF UNION, AUSTRALIA, DECEMBER 1979 TO DECEMBER 1984

End of December—									
1984									
Number of members									
Number of members									
Average number of members per union									
Per cent of total members									
Cumulative per cent of total members									
Number of members									
1979									
1980									
1981									
1983									
1982									
— '000—									
Under 100	2.2	1.9	1.7	2.5	2.0	2.0	—	0.1	0.1
100 and under 250	6.3	7.1	7.3	6.1	6.0	6.9	0.2	0.2	0.3
250 and under 500	10.4	8.6	9.8	9.1	8.9	8.4	0.4	0.3	0.6
500 and under 1,000	30.6	31.6	33.4	28.8	33.9	37.2	0.7	1.2	1.8
1,000 and under 2,000	60.6	64.1	64.3	61.3	57.7	56.7	1.3	1.9	3.7
2,000 and under 5,000	155.9	145.5	129.0	132.0	132.0	127.3	3.2	4.2	7.9
5,000 and under 10,000	152.1	155.9	156.1	147.3	149.3	156.1	7.1	5.2	13.1
10,000 and under 20,000	349.8	317.6	287.4	305.6	328.1	289.5	14.5	9.4	22.5
20,000 and under 30,000	272.2	256.0	280.2	207.4	315.2	307.3	23.6	10.1	32.6
30,000 and under 40,000	174.3	243.9	316.5	354.6	254.7	207.1	41.4	6.8	39.4
40,000 and under 50,000	410.5	422.5	329.2	402.7	363.2	495.7	45.0	16.4	55.8
50,000 and under 80,000	450.7	466.4	531.6	405.6	320.9	244.5	61.1	8.0	63.8
80,000 and over	798.1	834.8	847.4	949.4	1,013.4	1,089.5	109.0	36.0	100.0
Total	2,873.6	2,955.9	2,994.1	3,012.4	2,985.2	3,028.5	9.2	100.0	100.0

TABLE 6. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF STATES AND/OR TERRITORIES OF OPERATION, AUSTRALIA DECEMBER 1984

End of December—	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six or more	Two or more	Total all unions
NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS								
1979	186	10	6	11	26	89	142	328
1980	183	10	6	13	24	89	142	325
1981	183	9	6	13	24	89	141	324
1982	178	11	3	12	16	102	144	322
1983	176	11	5	11	15	101	143	319
1984	186	12	3	11	17	100	143	329
NUMBER OF MEMBERS ('000)								
1979	550.9	22.7	24.3	177.5	149.3	1,948.9	2,322.7	2,873.6
1980	532.1	58.9	25.3	161.1	111.2	2,067.2	2,423.7	2,955.9
1981	540.5	57.0	25.4	165.2	121.0	2,085.1	2,453.6	2,994.1
1982	502.9	21.2	55.7	132.2	135.4	2,165.0	2,509.5	3,012.4
1983	531.9	22.9	56.3	132.1	133.6	2,108.5	2,453.3	2,985.2
1984	540.7	23.9	53.7	138.7	143.2	2,128.4	2,487.9	3,028.5